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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NOUAKCHOTT 000354

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: FNDD AND RFD FEEL THEY ARE NEGOTIATING "UNDER THE GUN"

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 336

Classified By: Classified by Ambassador Mark M. Boulware, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: The FNDD and RFD have accepted Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade's invitation to travel to Dakar on May 28 for a last negotiation. They stated they are accepting "in good faith" but reiterated their distrust of the Senegalese and the Libyans. According to FNDD and RFD emissaries, Gadio gave them a document with a solution that would "open the door to their acceptance of General Aziz's agenda." FNDD and RFD will continue negotiating but insist on the suspension of the electoral agenda, the release of political prisoners and refuse to accept the Senegalese document as a basis for negotiations. Both parties suspect the Senegalese are looking to "blame the negotiation's failure" on them. They would prefer the international community get involved and the European Union and the United States provide guarantees. They feel they are negotiating under the gun with the elections only eleven days away and fear a possible spread of violence due to increased repression. End summary.

¶2. (C) On May 26, FNDD co-leader and UFP President Mohamed Ould Maouloud and RFD Vice-President Mohamed Abderrahmane Ould Moine updated Ambassador Boulware on the Senegalese mediation. Maouloud summarized the outcome of last week's meetings between Senegalese Foreign Minister Cheikh Tidiane Gadio and the different parties to the crisis. He stated General Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz had told Gadio he was opposed to the liberation of the political prisoners, one of the opposition's pre-conditions for a second meeting (Reftel). According to Ould Maouloud, the mediators, who could not deliver the pre-conditions, still insisted that the opposition meet with Aziz. Ould Maouloud realized that the Senegalese had no "capacity to pressure" Aziz. The opposition made it clear that "they did not see the point of a meeting if the General was not willing to stop his unilateral agenda."

¶3. (C) In order to save the mediation, the FNDD and RFD told Gadio all they wanted was for Aziz to stop his campaign until the talks took place. Note: Aziz only delayed the

beginning of his campaign for 24 hours. End note. In this last meeting, Gadio provided them with a document with a pre-made solution and asked them to consider accepting. The FNDD was surprised to find out it supported Aziz's agenda and "opened the door for the opposition to participate in his agenda." Upon returning to see Aziz, the mediators were told that the General had made enough concessions and that he was heading to Kifa to start his campaign.

¶4. (C) Ould Maouloud explained they received a letter from Wade on May 24 inviting all parties to send five representatives to Senegal for a last negotiation. The FNDD and RFD accepted but insist on having their pre-conditions met and reject the Senegalese document as an acceptable basis for negotiations. The meeting will take place on May 28 and the FNDD and RFD delegations will travel to Dakar on May 27. Note: Local press stated Aziz will participate but no formal confirmation has been provided. End note.

¶5. (C) Ould Moine said that President Wade had met with the RFD to tell them they "should not count on the international community." He said he had "experience working with these countries and that they would do nothing in the end." Note: By "these countries," he seemed to mean Western countries. End note. The RFD interpreted these statements as Wade's way of "forcing them" to accept his terms. According to the RFD, the African Union has been "hijacked" by Qadhafi and the Senegalese.

¶6. (C) Ould Moine believes that the purpose of the

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negotiation and the pre-made solution is to "blame the negotiation's failure on the opposition." According to him, Senegal and Libya are positive that the FNDD and RFD will not accept a unilateral solution and that the negotiation will fail. He said the RFD felt the EU and the US have given them "the cold shoulder." "All we ask for is credible and transparent elections and this is impossible in a country that is so divided," he stated. "I fear there is no solution to this problem" For him, the only solution would be a negotiation guaranteed by the EU and the US. "If the international community does not take the reigns, we are headed towards failure," he suggested. According to Ould Moine, the mediators have encouraged them to accept the pre-set solution without discussion as the "international community is fed up and the opposition needs to come to terms with reality."

¶7. (C) The Ambassador reaffirmed US support for the mediation and desire for all parties to find a consensual solution. He made it clear that "not just any solution will do." He stated he doubts the AU and the international community will accept a unilateral solution.

¶8. (C) Ould Maouloud and Ould Moine feel like they are "negotiating under the gun." They believe that either they accept the solution proposed by the Senegalese or Aziz will be allowed to move forward with his agenda. "Aziz will get himself elected while we are at the negotiation table," they stated. They stressed that if the elections take place, the political class in Mauritania will be excluded from politics and it will become impossible to restore political order.

¶9. (C) Ould Maouloud told the Ambassador he wants the international community to issue a statement calling for "calm and inclusive dialogue" and a "solution that respects terms described in the February 20 International Contact Group statement." Ambassador reminded them that the US had issued a statement along these lines a week ago.

¶10. (C) Ould Maouloud and Ould Moine denounced the regime's violent repression on May 25 of RFD and FNDD demonstrations in front of UFP party headquarters in Nouadhibou. They said it was the first time in history a regime had violated party headquarters. Note: Local press reported that anti-riot

police tear gased, beat and arrested demonstrators right in front of UFP party headquarters. This is the first time the regime has arrested demonstrators. End note. They stated that reaction to the regime's prohibition to demonstrate during the campaign could be violent and "the country could go up in flames." They requested the US and the international community express their concern about the violent repression of demonstrations to Director General of Surete Nationale General Hadi, who they consider responsible. "The mediation cannot take place in such an environment," they stressed.

¶11. (C) Ould Maouloud and Ould Moine ended the meeting by asking the Ambassador if he knew what the format of the Senegalese meeting would be and who would participate on the EU side. The Ambassador said he did not but would inquire.

¶12. (C) Comment: The Senegalese mediation continues despite the climate of mistrust. At the same time, General Aziz's campaign keeps moving ahead full speed. The FNDD and RFD are still calling for, and counting on, international community support. With the election only 11 days away, they might be disappointed in their hopes. Nevertheless, we encouraged them to work toward a solution until the last minute. End comment.

BOULWARE